

# Research on Innovative Approaches to Ideological and Political Education in College English Teaching

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## Abstract

College English, as a compulsory course with both instrumental and humanistic attributes, bears a unique mission of integrating language training with value guidance. Curriculum ideological and political education plays an indispensable role in accomplishing the significant mission. This paper attempts to analyze the feasibility and necessity of innovating ideological and political teaching approaches and proposes multi-dimensional innovative teaching approaches, aiming to construct an integrated and blended teaching mode. These proposed innovative approaches can effectively achieve the full infiltration of moral education into all aspects of language teaching, realize the organic integration of language knowledge transmission, ability development, value shaping and guidance, and provide operable reform references for College English curriculum ideological and political construction in the new era.

**Keywords:** College English teaching, ideological and political education, innovative approaches, blended teaching mode.

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## INTRODUCTION

College English teaching in China has undergone a lot of hardships and has obtained remarkable progress. The Ministry of Education (2017) proposed to "sort out the ideological and political education elements and functions contained in each professional course, and integrate them into various aspects of classroom teaching". In recent years, the organic integration of ideological and political education into university teaching has played an important role in implementing the fundamental task of cultivating morality and talents. College English teaching not only bears the responsibility of cultivating students' language skills, but also needs to integrate ideological and political education into language teaching, guiding students to establish correct worldviews, outlooks on life, and values.

A certain number of research accomplishments have been achieved in the field of ideological and political education integrated into College English teaching. Wen Qiufang (2021) proposed the connotation and implementation framework of ideological and political education in college foreign language courses. Wang Junju and Lu Ping (2024) conducted a study on the design of ideological and political education in university foreign language courses based on the output-oriented approach. At present, the effective integration

of College English teaching with professional curriculum system is not quite high, and there is still a phenomenon of "superficial and hard integration" of ideological and political education. The effectiveness of the use of ideological and political materials in the course is not strong, which affects the effectiveness of educating people (Sun Liang *et al.*, 2023). Therefore, exploring innovative approaches to ideological and political education in College English teaching is particularly important. This paper attempts to explore the innovative teaching approaches to construct a blended teaching mode of ideological and political education in College English teaching. Thus students' language knowledge and skills are developed while their values are shaped.

## The Feasibility and Necessity of Innovating Teaching Approaches

College English teaching bears the characteristics of instrumentality, cross-culture communication, comprehensiveness and humanity, which makes it different from primary and secondary English teaching and learning. Instrumentality refers to making use of the language carrier to impart knowledge, develop abilities and integrate moral education into classroom teaching. Comprehensiveness refers to the integrated cultivation of language knowledge, language ability, cultural literacy, critical thinking ability, and ideological and political literacy. Humanity means that

College English shoulders the responsibility of upgrading students' humanistic quality. Moreover, the content of College English teaching covers diverse materials such as Chinese and foreign literature, social culture, and international hot issues, naturally carrying the functions of cultural dissemination and value guidance, providing rich content carriers for innovative teaching approaches. College English teaching does not only focus on conveying knowledge and skills but also on spreading the hidden values, spiritual and philosophical components of culture, which demonstrates the feasibility and necessity of integrating ideological and political education into College English teaching. Integrating moral education into language teaching can effectively achieve morality cultivation in a less didactic way and develop students' critical thinking ability spontaneously. Thus, students will be cultivated into talents with firm patriotism and correct social values.

Therefore, driven by English textbooks, the teaching practice should focus on the two centers of "student development" and "student learning", clarify the three tasks of "knowledge transmission, ability cultivation, and value shaping", and integrate them into one. Students' four abilities can be cultivated, which include the following four aspects: language proficiency, critical thinking ability, innovation ability, and communication ability by constructing five dimensions: enriching the content system, updating teaching methods, innovating task design, reforming the evaluation system, and strengthening the ability to educate people. The objective of these approaches is to achieve the six goals of shaping the ideological and political values in College English teaching: four confidences, patriotism, core values, mutual learning of civilizations, ecological civilization, and common awareness of human destiny.

Innovating traditional teaching approaches is an inevitable requirement for improving the effectiveness of ideological and political education in College English. Refactoring the teaching process, optimizing the teaching logic, and deeply integrating ideological and political elements such as patriotism, cultural confidence, rule of law, and international perspective into all aspects of English teaching can truly unleash the educational value of the English curriculum. The deep integration of ideological and political education with College English teaching is not a rigid grafting. The high degree of compatibility between the two in terms of teaching carriers, curriculum attributes, and educational goals provides a solid foundation for the implementation of the innovative teaching approaches. At the same time, the development of educational technology in the new era, the abundance of teaching resources, and the upgrading of teacher-student cognition further solidify the feasibility of innovative practice, making diversified and integrated new teaching models meet the conditions

for implementation. In addition, the popularization of digital and information-based education has completely broken the temporal and spatial limitations of traditional teaching patterns, providing a diverse platform for innovating ideological and political teaching approaches. Digital resources such as smart classrooms, online teaching platforms, multimedia teaching systems, short videos, online cross-cultural communication platforms are becoming increasingly abundant. In short, convenient technological means and abundant digital resources have significantly reduced the threshold for innovative teaching approaches, making personalized, scenario based and immersive ideological and political education teaching practice feasible and necessary for comprehensive promotion.

### **The Implementation Approaches to Innovating Ideological and Political Education in College English teaching**

On the basis of clarifying the concept and connotation of ideological and political education, innovating implementation approaches, reflecting on and evaluating the effectiveness of education, new models of ideological and political education are explored to construct a practical paradigm for talent cultivation in the new era. By exploring the ideological and political elements in textbooks, the implementation approaches to ideological and political education can be innovated and applied in College English teaching. The specific paths and measures may include using typical teaching cases and hot issues to guide classroom teaching, constructing a teaching mode with clear teaching objectives, vivid teaching content, and objective evaluation system. Teaching concepts and classroom design need to be innovated and reformed through speculative discussions and diverse teaching activities, and subtly carrying out ideological and political education, internalizing ideological and political education and transforming it into practical actions. Thus, the transformation of classroom teaching into value shaping can be truly realized and the educational effectiveness of College English teaching can be promoted.

Through theoretical learning, teaching practice, discussion and exchange, problem diagnosis, cooperation and reflection, ideological and political elements can be naturally embedded in language knowledge and cultural teaching and get deeply integrated together. Therefore, the teaching quality can be effectively improved. At the same time, it promotes the continuous improvement and development of teaching philosophy, teaching ability, reform and innovation, professional competence, and other aspects of College English teachers, strengthens their ability to cultivate ideological and political education through curriculum, and continuously improves their ability to carry out new quality ideological and political work. Above all, it helps to achieve the higher education goal of cultivating moral character and cultivating excellent

composite talents with both morality and talent, improve the effectiveness of education, and enhance our nation's cultural soft power. By the means of innovating the implementation approaches to ideological and political education in College English teaching, a blended teaching mode for ideological and political education is expected to be constructed.

To construct a blended ideological and political teaching mode of "online + offline" and "in-class + after-class", the following innovative paths have been explored and can be applied in the teaching practice from four dimensions: optimizing teaching design, enriching teaching content, innovating teaching methods, and improving evaluation system.

### **3.1 Optimizing teaching design and reconstructing teaching modules**

The teaching mode of College English that integrates with ideological and political education follows the principle of combining online and offline teaching. Firstly, teachers can explore and determine the ideological and political elements based on different themes, delve into ideological and political materials, identify the ideological and political themes, design and introduce typical and appropriate ideological and political cases into the teaching process, and ultimately construct a student-centered ideological and political education system for College English courses (Yang Jincui, 2020). The comprehensive teaching design consists of three stages: pre-class preparation, in class presentation, and post class extension. Before class, students are assigned with tasks to preview and study the main text on the online teaching platform by themselves, comprehend and analyze the text, complete preview tasks and classroom group presentation tasks. The teacher monitors the progress of task completion at any time in the background, offers personalized assistance and guidance online anytime, diagnoses the learning situation, and improves the teaching design to facilitate the explanation of key and difficult points during class. In class, the teaching objectives can be divided into three dimensions: knowledge teaching, ability improvement, and value guidance. Knowledge teaching includes sorting out key words and sentences, and explaining writing skills and structures in detail; Ability enhancement can be achieved through classroom activity implementation which includes students' classroom presentations, group activities, language output, and students' mutual evaluations; Value orientation includes conveying emotional values, exploring ideological and political issues, and refining and elevating themes. After class, teachers assign basic homework and expansion project tasks to students, provide audio and video related materials for students to learn as extracurricular expansion activities, write course logs and reflect on the teaching effect.

To educate students, teachers as educators should first cultivate themselves to enhance their education competence. Before implementing ideological and political education in the curriculum, teachers should first improve their own level of ideological and political education in the curriculum teaching. There are quite multiple feasible and effective approaches available for teachers to adopt, such as delving into the ideological and political elements in textbooks and real life, thinking about how to optimize classroom activities, and integrating political identity, patriotism, ideological and moral education, legal cultivation, and excellent traditional Chinese culture into teaching practice based on the themes of the teaching modules. Thus, the ideological and political education can be carried out in a gentle and subtle manner like the spring breeze and rain. Throughout the teaching process, students' initiative should be continuously stimulated. Teachers should spare no efforts to guide them to independently seek ideological and political elements in classroom presentations, group discussions, research summaries, and other relevant aspects to cultivate students' patriotism, scientific and humanistic spirit. At the same time, teachers should pay attention to enhancing the implicit ideological and political functions, emphasizing mainstream value guidance in the process of knowledge transmission and skill development, and truly achieving the goal of educating students in all aspects throughout the entire teaching process.

### **3.2 Enriching teaching content and cultivating patriotism**

Curriculum ideological and political education is not a "curriculum" in form, but rather an "idea" in essence (Cai Jigang, 2021). While adhering to the student-centered teaching philosophy, it is also necessary to enhance students' emotional awareness through the dissolution of knowledge, deepen their understanding of traditional cultural background, and enable them to improve their cross-cultural communication skills and cultural confidence through critical thinking and discussion, thus achieving the dual purpose of language input and output in this course.

The teaching of ideological and political education in College English courses revolves around the content of the school-based coursebook—"Understanding Contemporary China: A Reading and Writing Course". Each unit is selected and written around a specific theme, covering a wide range of content: the mission of youth, protection of ecological environment, confidence in the socialist system, new development philosophy, national rejuvenation, mutual learning among civilizations and so on. Most of the themes in the book are related to traditional Chinese culture and the development path of China, making it an excellent material for the organic integration of "curriculum ideology and politics" into English teaching. For instance, the title of Unit One is *The Mission of*

*Chinese Youth*. The text is an excerpt taken from the speech made by President Xi Jinping at a conference marking the centenary of the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement, which makes very perfect material to cultivate students' patriotism and make them understand the mission of contemporary Chinese youth and shoulder the mission of the times. A keynote speech on "The Mission of Chinese Youth" can be designed and held to cultivate and inspire their sense of mission and responsibility. In the meantime, the experience of red culture is enhanced in the process of completing the tasks, contributing to the integration of ideological and political content into the mind and heart.

The teaching content should not be limited to textbooks, but should be collected from diverse learning sources such as the English versions of "CHINA DAILY", "Learning power" Learning Platform, People's Daily Online, and Xinhua News Agency, which are relevant to the themes of the textbook. The above media can provide articles, reports and video resources to promote patriotism and socialist core values for the curriculum ideological and political education, such as "The Story of the CPC's Party Building" and "Multilingual Narration of Red Culture in Home". What's worth mentioning is that the premise for selecting good extracurricular teaching materials is that teachers themselves must be able to objectively treat foreign cultures, guide students to firmly hold correct political positions, resist negative ideological and cultural infiltration, and truly integrate value guidance into knowledge transmission and ability cultivation.

In addition, teachers should promptly supplement students with English expressions of Chinese characteristic vocabulary, such as leading students to study the government work report and white paper, interpreting the connotation of national strategic policies, from shallow to deep, from easy to difficult. In practical applications, teachers can intersperse video resources and reading materials with news buzzwords and hot topics as the main theme in each class, guiding students to establish correct values.

### ***3.3 Innovating teaching methods to promote critical thinking abilities***

The content of the textbooks and resources selected for College English does not contradict with the socialist core values, but some of the content spreads Western cultural values (Chen Qian, 2022). Therefore, teachers need to guide students to understand and absorb foreign cultures with the correct attitude. Promoting critical thinking and facilitating output are also the core missions of language teaching. On the one hand, teachers should adopt rich and innovative teaching methods which include but are not limited to task-based teaching, demonstration-based teaching, problem-oriented teaching, output-oriented teaching, heuristic teaching, cooperative inquiry-based teaching, communicative

approach, case analysis teaching, group discussion, scenario simulation teaching, and other such effective and practical teaching approaches based on the talent cultivation plan. The teaching content should be adjusted at any time and in a timely manner.

In terms of innovating teaching methods, teachers should continuously improve teaching approaches, as well as design and construct appropriate learning platforms and multi-channel emergency plans for each class. The deep integration of College English teaching and information technology is an inevitable trend in the development of College English teaching in the new era. Under the guidance of the digital education strategy, relying on multimedia, online platforms, and AI language tools to revolutionize traditional English teaching is the inevitable trend and core path for high-quality development of College English teaching in the new era. Digital technology empowerment supported by advanced technologies offers multiple options for the upgrading of College English teaching. The multi-channel innovative teaching mode should cover diverse dimensions including physical classrooms, U-campus smart platform, ideological and political themed website, and social media, so that a blended College English ideological and political teaching mode can be constructed from three dimensions: national, social, and individual.

To construct a blended College English teaching mode, teachers should organically integrate listening, speaking, reading, and writing into the teaching trajectory to enhance students' comprehensive English ability and ideological, political, and humanistic literacy. On the other hand, based on the in-depth analysis of textbooks, teachers should explore the integration of ideological and political teaching content from multiple perspectives, dig deep into ideological and political elements, select and refine ideological and political materials in English teaching, synthesize moral education teaching resources, make full use of multiple media networks, and comprehensively promote ideological and political education in College English teaching.

### ***3.4 Improving the evaluation system to achieve the infiltration of moral education***

In the teaching process of formative assessment, learning, teaching, and evaluation are intertwined, and formative assessment tightly combines the three to form a unity. The ideological and political education in College English teaching is based on the concept of formative assessment, emphasizing the formation of correct values in students throughout the learning process and fostering students' abilities to tell Chinese stories well in English (Liu Jianda, 2020). Therefore, the effectiveness of curriculum ideological and political education should be evaluated from a multidimensional and dynamic perspective. The entire ideological and

political evaluation mechanism will evaluate students' learning situation through classroom quizzes, interactive communication performances, classroom tasks, and homework. The students' participation in classroom ideological and political activities, whether they actively answer questions, whether they actively discuss with group members, and whether they accomplish classroom presentations and other group tasks should all be included in the scope of process evaluation and assessment. Teachers can conduct semi-structured interviews during and at the end of the semester, truthfully recording the interview results, classifying and coding the data for analysis in order to track students' true feelings about moral education and achieve a close connection between moral education goals and English learning goals. At the end of the course, students can complete the learning evaluation of this course through the online evaluation system (including a questionnaire survey on the degree of achievement of the humanistic and moral education goals of College English). In addition, students are required to submit their moral education gains from this course in the form of a thesis report, which will serve as an important basis for teachers to improve the ideological and political education of College English courses in the future. This is also an important component of summative evaluation. In addition, final exams, as one of the necessary and important summative evaluation methods, can also be adopted to assess the effectiveness of moral education. The overall evaluation mechanism constitutes a closed-loop model of "textbook—in class—out of class—evaluation—feedback" to promote learning and teaching through evaluation.

## CONCLUSION

The concept of "curriculum ideological and political education" plays an important guiding role and entails practical significance in achieving the teaching objectives of College English. Curriculum ideological and political education represents a fundamental reform direction for College English teaching, and helps promote the unity of knowledge imparting and value guidance, with cultivating students' language competence and shaping their values as the dual fundamental missions. This paper systematically analyzes the feasibility and necessity of innovating ideological and political teaching approaches in College English, explores the practical approaches, aiming to construct an integrated "online + offline, in-class + after-class" blended teaching mode from four core dimensions: optimizing teaching design, enriching teaching content, innovating teaching methods, and improving the evaluation system.

The three-stage teaching design (pre-class preparation, in-class teaching and post-class expansion) subtly integrates patriotism, cultural confidence and other essential ideological and political elements into language learning, unifying knowledge delivery,

competence cultivation and value guidance without mechanical content splicing. By supplementing the teaching content in the textbook with authoritative multilingual media materials, students' comprehension of China's cultural essence sense of patriotism can be enhanced, which boosts their cultural confidence. What's more, diverse teaching strategies and digital tools contribute to the promotion of students' critical thinking abilities and cross-cultural communication skills, breaking the time-space restrictions of traditional classrooms to establish a multi-level blended teaching mode. Moreover, the combined formative and summative assessment creates a closed-loop "textbook—class—extracurricular—evaluation—feedback" mechanism. By evaluating classroom engagement, group presentations, reflection papers and final exams, the system shifts the focus from language scores to students' holistic growth and truly measures value education effects.

Long-term tracking of the teaching practice is needed to test the blended mode's effectiveness for further research. Future work will involve differentiating particular teaching plans for targeted students with uneven English levels and collect empirical data to refine the teaching framework and assessment indicators. In the new era, College English teachers should deepen the integration of language teaching and curriculum ideological and political education, develop diversified digital immersive teaching methods, fulfill the fundamental task of fostering virtues, cultivate versatile talents with lofty ideals and global perspectives and elevate the curriculum ideological and political education to new heights.

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